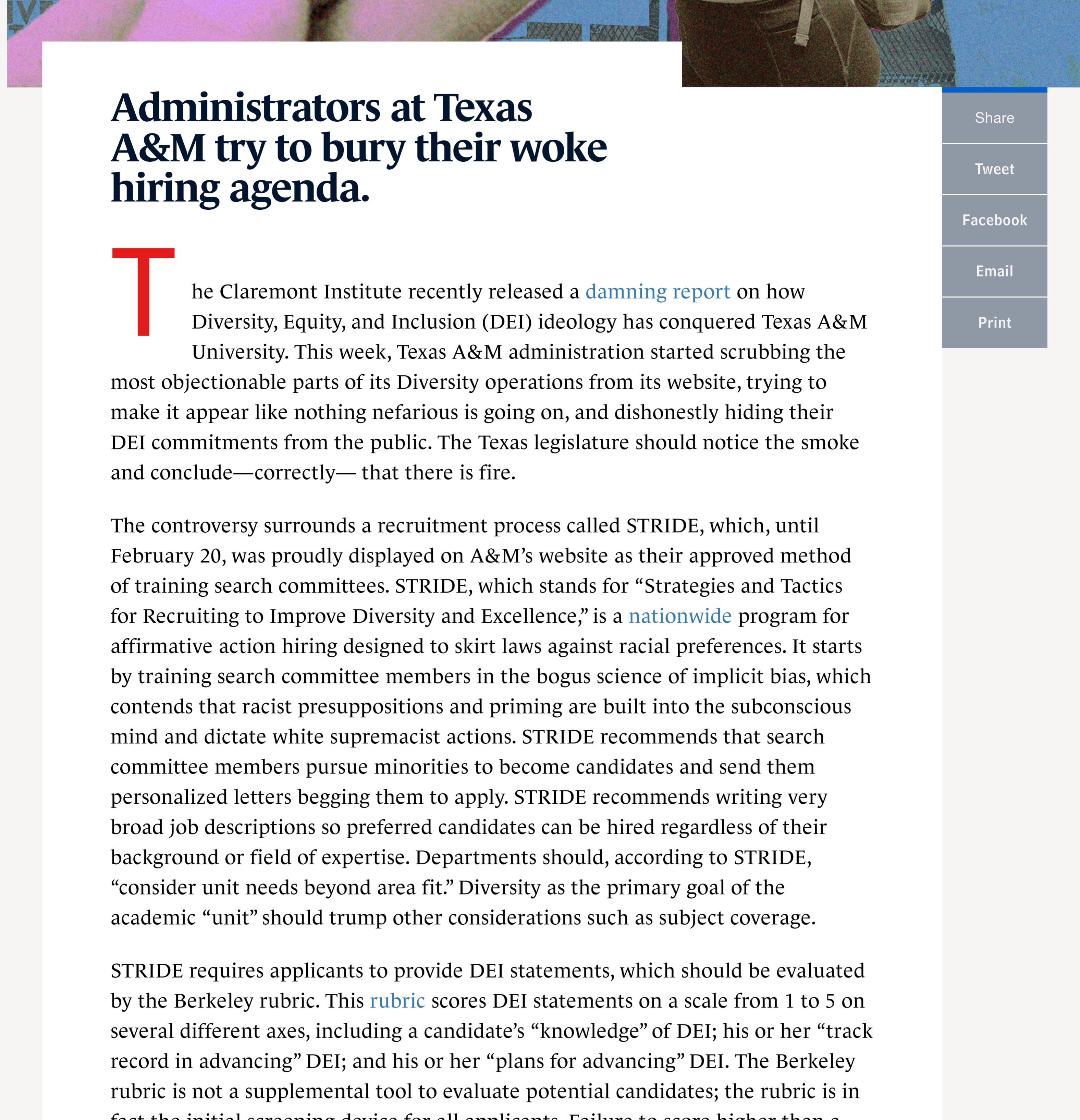


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5 minutes

DEI by Any Other Name Still Stinks

Scott Yenor



Administrators at Texas A&M try to bury their woke hiring agenda.

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The Claremont Institute recently released a [damning report](#) on how Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) ideology has conquered Texas A&M University. This week, Texas A&M administration started scrubbing the most objectionable parts of its Diversity operations from its website, trying to make it appear like nothing nefarious is going on, and dishonestly hiding their DEI commitments from the public. The Texas legislature should notice the smoke and conclude—correctly—that there is fire.

The controversy surrounds a recruitment process called STRIDE, which, until February 20, was proudly displayed on A&M's website as their approved method of training search committees. STRIDE, which stands for "Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence," is a [nationwide](#) program for affirmative action hiring designed to skirt laws against racial preferences. It starts by training search committee members in the bogus science of implicit bias, which contends that racist presuppositions and priming are built into the subconscious mind and dictate white supremacist actions. STRIDE recommends that search committee members pursue minorities to become candidates and send them personalized letters begging them to apply. STRIDE recommends writing very broad job descriptions so preferred candidates can be hired regardless of their background or field of expertise. Departments should, according to STRIDE, "consider unit needs beyond area fit." Diversity as the primary goal of the academic "unit" should trump other considerations such as subject coverage.

STRIDE requires applicants to provide DEI statements, which should be evaluated by the Berkeley rubric. This [rubric](#) scores DEI statements on a scale from 1 to 5 on several different axes, including a candidate's "knowledge" of DEI; his or her "track record in advancing" DEI; and his or her "plans for advancing" DEI. The Berkeley rubric is not a supplemental tool to evaluate potential candidates; the rubric is in fact the initial screening device for all applicants. Failure to score higher than a cutoff is grounds for immediate elimination. DEI statements coupled with the Berkeley rubric constitute an ideological litmus test in modern job searches.

Suddenly, and without announcing it, A&M deleted STRIDE from its website this week. All links to the STRIDE programs are dead, even on the Wayback Machine archive. The handbook is not available, nor are refresher videos. The STRIDE program itself has largely been sent down the memory hole. In place of the old STRIDE handbook, A&M has adopted "[Faculty Search Committee Training](#)" with a new Search Committee Training Manual. The Manual is password protected, available only to A&M employees but we have received it from sources at A&M. This manual is word-for-word the same as the STRIDE handbook, except in two respects.

First, whereas the use of DEI statements was required in STRIDE, now it is optional. STRIDE tells committees to "consider requiring applicants to write" about their personal commitments to DEI, while the new handbook tells committees to "consider allowing applicants to write about" them.

Second, all mentions to the Berkeley rubric have been excised from the pages of the new handbook. Under STRIDE, the Berkeley rubric was the only recommended source for evaluating DEI statements. The current handbook gives another option, though it is largely in line with the Berkeley rubric. The new manual suggests that committee members attend to this [guide](#) for rubrics that will help them evaluate DEI statements. The guide suggests the Berkeley rubric and the University of Washington rubric, which is functionally equivalent to the Berkeley rubric. The new guidelines retain the concept of setting "minimally acceptable" scores demonstrating commitment to DEI before allowing candidates to proceed in the search. A&M's new system hides its commitment to screening based on diversity, without changing the substance of that commitment.

A&M's removal of STRIDE from its website is indicative of a deeper problem. Small efforts to regulate or reform modern universities will not succeed unless there is a new spirit informing the way administrators view the university. If administrators are committed to DEI, they will inevitably find ways to infuse it into the daily life and operations of the modern university. If administrators are indifferent to DEI, woke activists can easily hijack administrative functions. Only administrators who are actively opposed to DEI and are motivated to root it out will pursue a vision of the university dedicated to meritocratic excellence. A&M may need new leadership to accomplish this goal.

A wag once said that it is the job of red state university presidents to lie to the legislature. That reality is beginning to play out at Texas A&M. The leadership at A&M has reacted to the revelations of our report with obfuscation and lies. They hide the Diversity football. It is long past time to recognize this and act accordingly with [higher education reform](#).

Scott Yenor is Senior Director of State Coalitions at the Claremont Institute. His latest book is *The Recovery of Family Life: Exposing the Limits of Modern Ideologies*.

Academic Freedom DEI higher education racial politics

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